



TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of February 24, 2010
2:00 p.m., Greensboro, NC
City Council Chambers
Melvin Municipal Office Building

ATTENDANCE

Tyler Meyer	<i>GDOT / TCC Chair</i>	Carolyn Joyner	<i>Town of Stokesdale</i>
Mike Mills	<i>NCDOT, Division 7</i>	Bob Wyrick	<i>Town of Pleasant Garden</i>
Adam Fischer	<i>GDOT Director</i>	Michael Brandt	<i>Town of Summerfield</i>
Lydia McIntyre	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Mark Brown	<i>Town of Summerfield</i>
Craig McKinney	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Bruce Oakley	<i>Town of Oak Ridge</i>
Andrew Spiliotis	<i>GDOT/MPO</i>	David Rowe	<i>Town of Oak Ridge</i>
Mark Kirstner	<i>PART</i>	Ron Frazier	<i>Citizen</i>
Ted Patrick	<i>COG/ Engineering</i>	Ron Patterson	<i>Citizen</i>
Dabney Sanders	<i>Action Greensboro</i>	Trip Brown	<i>Action Greensboro</i>

Robbie Perkins called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.

Action Items

1. Approve Minutes of January 27, 2010

Kirk Perkins moved for approval of the minutes. Mike Fox seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 27, 2010.

I. Reports, Concerns, and Discussion from MPO Area Towns

NA

Planning for the transportation future

2. Citizen Comments

Ron Frazier spoke with the TAC and Mike Mills regarding the noise readings that were conducted nearby his home near the southwestern section of the urban loop. Mills noted two readings were taken on Frazier's property, specifically in the northeast and southeast corners of Frazier's property. Additional readings were taken at the northern property line of the adjacent neighbor and at the end of Huntmaster Trail. Frazier noted 4:00 pm on a Thursday afternoon is not a representative time for highway noise at his property. Frazier said he preferred the measurement periods of Sunday night, Monday night, or a Monday morning. Mike Mills noted the average decibel reading was 68 at Frazier's house and 79 at the end of Huntmaster Trail. Robbie Perkins asked what could NCDOT do if additional readings were taken and proved louder. Mike Mills said NCDOT and the FHWA still could not do anything.

Robbie Perkins noted NCDOT intends to summarize the readings in writing and to summarize anything they will do and can do in writing, and to meet with Frazier to discuss and review this letter. Mike Fox told Ron Frazier that since he is new to the TAC and BOT, he intends to review the materials with Mike Mills. Fox noted he may or may not reach the same conclusion that NCDOT cannot take any action. Fox noted if no action can be taken we should report this to Frazier so that he can take whatever course he needs.

Ron Patterson, a resident of Sedgefield Oaks and neighbor of Ron Frazier, said he would like to see in writing why many of the homes were not identified as noise receptors. Mike Mills noted that a study was conducted in 2000, and NCDOT's Greg Smith can verify the designations of noise receptors. Mills said he would be glad to meet with him to go over this study. Mills said noise walls generally reduce noise up to 5 decibels. The ratio of the noise wall cost to the number of noise receptors is calculated to determine if a noise wall is built, given the receptors were built after the road project's "Date of Public Knowledge", where the public meeting finalizing the project location was presented. Mills also noted that even if a wall is present, it might not result in a 5 decibel reduction if the homes are far away since the noise travels over walls then back down again. Mills said he would summarize the information on the noise receptor study for Mike Fox and Ron Frazier.

3. Approve Yadkin River Bridge Air Conformity Report

Lydia McIntyre presented the Yadkin River Bridge Project's Air Conformity Report. The report is required for transportation projects receiving federal funds since the Triad region is a non-attainment air quality region. The report is required for the Yadkin River Bridge project to move forward. The public review comment period received no comments. McIntyre noted that the project received \$10 million in the stimulus TIGER grant funding. NCDOT had requested \$300 million in TIGER funding for the project. NCDOT is proceeding with a "Plan B" to move the project forward with Garvee bonds and state funds.

Kirk Perkins moved for approval of the minutes. Mike Fox seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the Yadkin River Bridge Air Conformity Report.

Business Items / Potential Action Items

1. Town Representation Discussion

Tyler Meyer presented an update on the TAC town representation discussion. Meyer summarized the history of TAC membership and the results of the survey sent to town officials soliciting their input on representation. Meyer also reviewed the research presented at the last TAC meeting. Meyer presented the requested follow up research on peer MPOs' experiences with adding new TAC members. Meyer noted that in general the peer MPOs all waited until after the Census and the related *Boundaries, Structures, and Governance Report*. Meyer also noted that other MPOs found it helpful to provide new TAC members with an orientation session. Meyer also noted that MPOs generally found that newly added members had varied success

implementing transportation projects, depending upon the municipality's ability to design, implement, and provide matching funds for projects.

Meyer presented the MPO staff's follow up recommendations for enhancing town representation. The recommended alternatives include 1) Examining TAC structure after the 2010 Census' *Boundaries, Structure, and Governance Report*; and at this point developing a more refined recommendation for enhancing membership. An opportunity for creating ex-officio membership would be available until then. 2) Adding one TAC seat that would be shared by the small towns with weighted voting for the shared seat based on the sum of all of the small towns' populations. The towns would caucus to determine who holds the seat and how often it rotates; and 3) Adding a seat for towns meeting the minimum population threshold of 5,000 as found in the Mecklenburg-Union MPO. Voting under the third recommendation would include weighted voting which would be directly proportional to each municipality's percent of the MPO region's population. Meyer noted that to change membership, the TAC bylaws must be amended and the MPO's Memorandum of Understanding must be updated and signed by each member municipality's council, and then approved by NCDOT.

The TAC, MPO staff, and the town staff and elected officials present discussed the recommendations. Michael Brandt spoke on behalf of the Town of Summerfield and noted that he talked to all of the towns attending the meeting today, and said they all said they prefer a full seat on the TAC, not a shared seat. Brandt noted that while the population of the small towns is relatively small, the land area of the towns is much larger and that a large share of new projects occurs near or within their municipalities.

Davie Rowe from the Town of Oak Ridge mentioned a number of transportation projects that are inside the boundaries of Oak Ridge. Rowe also mentioned projects that are not within the town limits that will directly impact the towns because of their close proximity. Rowe also said that the presence of the small towns would enhance decision making since the town leaders are more familiar with these roads since they travel them daily. Rowe also said that inclusion on the committee will increase their understanding of transportation planning through allowing them to be part of the decision making process from project's inception. Rowe noted that the weighting voting is not a deterrent.

The TAC members, town representatives, and MPO staff discussed the options presented. The result of the TAC member discussion was the identification of two potential variations.

Kirk Perkins proposed the option of a TAC seat shared between the towns. The towns would decide via caucus who was the representative. Kirk Perkins presented the scenario where there would not be weighted voting, rather just one member for the towns, two for the County, and three for the City. Since not all of the existing TAC members were in attendance today, Robbie Perkins noted further deliberation might be necessary to determine if under such a shared seat system would include weighted voting or not. Kirk Perkins noted this model could be revised in 2012 after the 2010 Census results if needed.

Robbie Perkins said he would be in favor of each town having a TAC seat that requests it that met minimum population requirements under a weighted voting system. The minimum population could be reduced from staff recommendations to accommodate Stokesdale.

Bob Wyrick from the Town of Pleasant Garden spoke in favor of the towns having separate seats on the TAC. Wyrick noted that Pleasant Garden's location is in southeastern Guilford County and the other municipalities are in northwest Guilford County. Wyrick also said the future growth potential of southeast Guilford County will play an important role in the future, and that having a seat at the table will help influence future decisions.

Mike Fox noted he is not opposed to small towns having a seat at the table. Fox said in his experience with other MPOs, decisions are usually not controversial. Fox noted that on occasion controversy does arise and in these cases a weighted voting mechanism is necessary.

The TAC asked the town staff and officials to review the shared seat option and individual seat options with their town councils and to contact TAC Chair Robbie Perkins at least one week before the March 24 TAC to note their satisfaction with either option. Robbie noted the likely alternative to the shared seat model described by Kirk Perkins would be each town receiving a seat that meets a minimum population threshold, which would likely be reduced to include Stokesdale. This option would include weighted voting. After the towns contact Robbie, he will discuss the results with other TAC members in order to assist in taking action at the March meeting.

Michael Brandt asked that the MPO examine potential changes in TCC representation that would accompany changes to the TAC board. Meyer noted that MPO staff will follow up with potential TCC changes at the next TAC meeting.

2. Introduce Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) draft

Tyler Meyer presented the draft 2010-2011 Unified Planning Work Program. The document accounts for USDOT planning grants for highways and transit. The plan programs the anticipated planning funds for the next fiscal year. Meyer identified the planning priorities that have been identified thus far. Ongoing priorities include involvement in the project development process, involvement in ongoing land use and transit planning activities, and administering the Long Range Transportation Plan and the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program. The UPWP also includes short term and new MPO planning projects such as the regional travel model update. The regional travel model development will enhance the existing model in preparation for the 2013 LRTP update. The model enhancements will allow the model to be updated continuously, and correct other model deficiencies. The UPWP also includes corridor feasibility studies which will likely occur in the PTI Airport area and eastern Guilford County. The UPWP will also examine the extension of the Atlantic and Yadkin Greenway to the north through Summerfield and Stokesdale and to the south to downtown Greensboro. The UPWP also includes an in-house update to the BiPed Plan and further development of the urban loop mapping tool to include other major roadway projects.

3. Urban Loop Prioritization

Tyler Meyer presented an update on NCDOT's proposed Urban Loop Prioritization process. NCDOT has proposed a process for prioritizing the remaining urban loop segments in North Carolina. NCDOT revised their first version after receiving input from the state's MPOs. NCDOT incorporated many of the proposed changes. NCDOT is soliciting comments on the second prioritization process draft. Meyer presented NCDOT's current proposed ranking criteria. MPO staff has a second round of draft comments that they intend to send to NCDOT. The final NCDOT decision will be influenced by funding availability, project readiness, and the discretion of the NCDOT secretary. The methodology will rank projects based on a benefit/cost ratio, with the project benefits divided by the project costs.

NCDOT is ranking Greensboro's urban loop segments as two segments, Bryan Blvd. to Lawndale, and Lawndale to US 70. Meyer noted that the MPO groups the remaining urban loop into 3 segments and that NCDOT combined the segments from US 70 to US 29 (Eastern Loop) and US 29 to Lawndale (Northern Loop) as one segment. NCDOT segment designations will not necessarily effect if the Eastern and Northern Loop segments are built at the same time. The comments the MPO will submit to NCDOT will recommend factoring out interchanges that will be built as separate projects after the loop's construction. The comments also suggest they consider protected right-of-way using the official roadway corridor map and/or the amount of right-of-way acquired, and that they revise the freight measurement to include the

presence of logistical and distribution terminals. The MPO commends NCDOT for adding the Total Travel Time savings measurement as a benefit, and for removing the non-loop funding criteria. Meyer also noted that NCDOT has approximately \$80-\$100 million a year in revenues for loop funding with roughly \$8 billion in urban loop needs. The Greensboro Urban Loop segments will fare well since they have completed the needed environmental documents and have relatively lower project costs relative to other loop segments with complete environmental documents.

4. Transportation Improvement Program Update

Tyler Meyer provided an update on the potential Federal passage of a Jobs for America/Jobs for Main Street Bill. Congress will likely pass an amount of transportation spending comparable to what was passed under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009. The current legislation requires 90 days to put a project under contract. National transportation organizations are trying to change this requirement because the 90 day contract period for projects is challenging at best. Meyer noted that quick action will be necessary if and when a bill passes.

Drew Spiliotis presented a 09-15 MTIP amendment for GTA that would add 4 hybrid expansion buses and the bill's maximum allowable operating expenses of 10% to the unfunded portion of the MTIP. The projects were selected based on the 90 day contract period and an assumption that funding levels would be similar to the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009. The current needs for GTA that could be met under a 90 day contract period are roughly 3 million. The funding made available under ARRA was 5 million, leaving a 2 million gap. PART has indicated that they currently do not have any projects that could meet the 90 day timelines but this may change after July. The amendment is necessary in order to designate the funding source as Jobs for America.

The proposed MTIP amendment would add the unfunded expansion buses with a proposed new funding source to the STIP and make the project eligible for the Jobs for America bill if and when it passes. Meyer noted additional dialogue will occur and that this amendment is a preliminary action to prepare for the bill's pending passage. Kirk Perkins motioned for approval of the MTIP amendment, Mike Fox seconded. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the MTIP modification.

Tyler Meyer presented an update on the STP-DA program. Recently \$1 million of funds was deobligated for both the Battleground Rail Trail and the first series of sidewalk project contracts since the projects' costs came in under engineer's estimates. Meyer noted this money could be spent this year on short term projects. Recommendations on short term project opportunities will be presented at the next meeting. Long term project opportunities will be reviewed in the near future.

Tyler Meyer presented an update on the result's on NCDOT's SPOT ranking process for highways and non-highway transportation, excluding the urban loops. Rankings are broken out by tier and project type. The tiers include statewide, regional, and sub-regional, and the project types include infrastructure, safety, and mobility. Meyer presented how MPO projects ranked in the different tiers. The project rankings for the MPO's had varied success. The I-73 connector ranked 12th in the statewide highway tier and the MPO had several highly ranked safety improvement projects for intersections. The intersection and sidewalk improvements at Battleground Ave. and Westridge Rd. ranked second statewide in the regional project tier. The MPO plans to follow up with NCDOT on with their methodology since key projects such as the Downtown Greenway, the Battleground Rail Trail, and city sidewalk projects did not appear in the rankings. We will follow up with NCDOT to see if these projects were included. The MPO will also follow up on the closure of the US 29 ramps which should potentially be considered a safety project.

5. Downtown Greenway Update

Trip Brown and Dabney Sanders of Action Greensboro presented an update on the Downtown Greenway's progress to date. Dabney presented project updates that have occurred since their last presentation to the MPO in May 2009. The Downtown Greenway small Phase 1 has been built. An official ribbon cutting ceremony will occur on March 24 at 4:00 pm. Dabney reported that Phase I is already being well used. Dabney presented the Greenway's signage plan and the design of the pedestrian refuge plan on S. Eugene Street. Dabney noted the public participation that went into planning for Phase 2 of the Downtown Greenway. A preferred design will be presented at a public workshop at the end of March. Dabney said efforts are underway to complete the Downtown Greenway Phase 2 design by the end of the year so that when funding opportunities are available that construction can occur. Phase 3 of the Downtown Greenway is from Fisher/Eugene to Smith/the Battleground Rail Trail. Public meetings for Phase 3's design are tentatively scheduled for April or May. Phase 4 is adjacent to the rail line actively used by Chandler Concrete. Federal funding will be sought to support the project under the federal Rails-to-Trails program.

Trip Brown spoke about the funding sources for the Downtown Greenway. The overall projected project costs consist of the following: \$1 million maintenance endowment; 1 million administration costs; \$6.5 million parks and public art; \$11 million for traffic safety, street walkway improvements, and stream restoration; and \$6.5 million for the trail itself and site furnishings. Brown anticipates \$17.5 million will be funded by the public sector and \$8.5 million will be funded by the private sector. Action Greensboro has secured approximately \$6.5 million in private sector commitments. \$4.5 million of the \$6 million of private funds were contingent upon the bonds passing and being spent. Brown said the private funds should be used as leverage for city funds which can leverage state and federal funds. Securing funding is now focusing on finishing design for potential funding sources can be applied towards constructing. Trip Brown also noted the economic development and public health benefits that will accrue from the Downtown Greenway upon its completion.

6. Transportation Project Activities

Tyler Meyer noted NCDOT's rail division received \$540 in stimulus funds to help implement the Southeast Corridor High Speed Rail between Charlotte and Raleigh. The total cost to implement the Southeast Corridor High Speed Rail is \$5 billion. The funds will implement rail projects ready to go such as double tracking between Greensboro and McLeansville, pursuing road closures, upgrades to the Depot, and adding two more trains a day on the Charlotte to Raleigh route.

7. MPO Strategic Topics

Tyler Meyer presented the project update to Pine Street and Lowdermilk Street intersection project. The project involves a rail crossing closure at Pine Street and realignment and a series of improvements at Lowdermilk Street. The Planning Board has recommended approval of the Pine Street closure. The next step will be going to City Council to approve the street crossing closure. If the council accepts, the NCDOT Rail Division will move forward with the project provided the city purchases the right-of-way for the Lowdermilk improvement, possibly aided by STP DA funding.

Craig McKinney noted that NCDOT's rail division has earmarked money they have directed towards the long term recommendations of the East Guilford Track Separation Study. This includes the project of extending Naco Road which would include a grade separation for Franklin Blvd, and a grade separation and realignment of rail line, and the extension of Naco Road to intersect with US 70. The completions would eliminate three at-grade crossings currently in place. These improvements will occur sooner than anticipated in the past.

Meyer noted that the MPO will issue a call for Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom funding at the next MPO meeting.

Other Items

1. Board Member Report

Mike Fox commended the Greensboro MPO for spending federal stimulus funds allocated to the area in a timely manner.

2. Regional Transportation News

Mark Kirstner distributed PART's annual report and informed TCC members of PART's annual Triad Commute Challenge that will be held at Triad Park on April 10th. A 'fun run' and other proceedings are planned for the event.

Robbie Perkins adjourned the meeting at 4:02 pm.